

Built to Last!
How to Really Love Your Wife
(Biblical Role of the Husband)

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / November 12, 2000

I. You Need to LOVE Your Wife

Eph. 5:25 "Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it"

A. You're commanded to love your wife. Husbands are 3 times in the space of just a few verses in Eph. 5 commanded to love their wives. The reason for this is that the wife seems to have such a great need for love, and husbands seem to have such a great lack of real, biblical love.

B. You're responsible for the inception, maintenance and growth of love in your marriage. It is YOUR responsibility in the home... not the wife! The wife has been made by God to **respond** to the love of her husband. She is commanded to respond with submission and respect, but we are to be the initiators... We are to overwhelm them with our love... selfless... sacrificial... forgiving... forbearing.... LOVE.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 "...in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power..."

C. What is Biblical Love?

Love is GIVING for the NEEDS of another without the ulterior MOTIVE of expecting anything in return.

Love is not a selfish GETTING. It is a GIVING thing. Biblical love is consistently tied to giving.

Gal. 2:20 "...the life I now live...I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and ***gave Himself*** for me."

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He ***gave*** His only begotten Son..."

Eph. 5:25 "...Christ also loved the church and ***gave Himself*** for it"

Can you get hurt loving this way? Sure you can! But the alternative to obeying God's command to love sacrificially is far worse.

"To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket -- safe, dark, motionless, airless -- it will change. It will not be broken; rather, it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable.... The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers of love...is Hell."

~ C.S. Lewis

D. And notice the Degrees of Love!

1. "As Christ loved the church"

- He loved **first**

I John 4:19 "We love him because he first loved us"

- He loved **most**

Eph. 5:25 He loves the church far more than the church loves Him

2. "As his own body"

Eph. 5:28 "So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies..."

After his wife was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, Columbia International University President Robertson McQuilkin found himself torn between two commitments. He wrote, "Friends and family often ask, 'How are you doing?...I am at a loss to respond... but I guess my friends are asking not about her needs, but about mine...I came across the common contemporary wisdom in this morning's newspaper in a letter to a national columnist: "I ended the relationship because it wasn't meeting my needs," the writer explained. The counselor's response was predictable: "What were your needs that didn't get met by him in the relationship? Do you still have these same needs? What would he have to do to fill these needs?...needs for communication, understanding, affirmation, common interests, sexual fulfillment – the list goes on. If the needs are not met, split. He offered no alternatives. I once reflected on the eerie irrelevance of every one of those criteria for me..."

When the time came, the decision was firm. It took no great calculation. It was a matter of integrity. Had I not promised, 42 years before, "in sickness and in health... till death do us part?" This was no grim duty to which I was stoically resigned, however. It was only fair. She had, after all, cared for me for almost four decades with marvelous devotion; now it was my turn. And such a partner she was! If I took care of her for 40 years, I would never be out of her debt..."

~ Oct. 1990 "Living By Vows" *Christianity Today*

II. You Need to be a Loving Servant- LEADER to Your Wife

Eph. 5:23 "For the husband is head of the wife as also Christ is head of the church..."

A. What is Leadership?

1. Leadership is not being a DICTATOR

(Mt. 20:25-28) You don't "lord it over them". You are not to be waited on hand and foot like some selfish Monarch.

2. Leadership does not mean you MAKE ALL THE DECISIONS

We need the insights and perspective of our wives. A man is a fool if he doesn't make use of his wife's gifts, talents, and insights.

3. Leadership is not being DEMANDING

Men, the Bible never tells us to "make sure your wife submits". That's not your job. Submission is a decision that your wife makes in her heart before God.

Eph. 5:22 "Wives, submit *yourselves* to your own husbands..." (Wuest)

Leadership IS...

1. Leadership is **BEING A SERVANT...** it's focused on meeting the needs of others

Matt. 20:20-28 and **John 13:1-15** give us the picture of what it means to be a leader, men. In John 13 the emblem of leadership is not a throne or a club but a big towel and a basin. A leader must have a servant's heart.

2. Leadership is **BEING AN EXAMPLE...** of self-control... of trusting God... of prayer and Bible study...of sacrificial giving.

I Cor. 4:16; 11:1 "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ"

3. Leadership is **BEING A PACE-SETTER...** being goal-oriented... having the "big" picture in mind

Where are you leading your wife? Where are you leading your family? Do you know? Do you have a plan? That's leadership, men.

III. You Need to be a Life-long Learner of Your Wife

Learn her ways. Study her.

I Pt. 3:7 "Likewise, you husbands, *dwelling with your wife with understanding*, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."

NASB "...live with your wives in an understanding way"

KJV "...live with them according to knowledge"

Built to Last: How to Really Love Your Wife
Ten Questions Every Man Should Ask His Wife

(Adapted from an article by Tom Elliff)

1. What can I do to cause you to feel more loved, understood, nurtured, cherished and honored?

2. How can I best demonstrate my appreciation for you, your ideas and your role as my wife and the mother of our children?

3. What can I do to assure you that I am listening to you, and that I hear and understand your heart's desires?

4. What can I do to make you feel absolutely secure whether this be financial, emotional, physical etc?

5. What can I do to ensure that you have confidence and joy in where God has us now in our lives, and where we believe He is leading us in the future (even if there are no immediate or intermediate plans for change?)

6. What attribute, character trait, habit or practice would you like to see me develop or improve?

7. What attribute, character trait, habit or practice would you like to develop in yourself, and how can I help you in this?

8. Is there some accomplishment, goal or objective in my life that would bring joy to your heart?

9. What would indicate to you my desire to become more like Christ?

10. What mutual goal(s) would you like to see us accomplish together?